



Department: Department Of Agriculture

Agency: Agricultural Research Service

Sub Agency: BA, U.S. National Arboretum, Floral & Nursery Plants Research Unit

Job Announcement Number:

ARS-D8E-0209

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## Overview

### Biological Science Laboratory Technician

**Salary Range:** 28,379.00 - 41,271.00 USD per year  
GS-04: \$28,379 to \$36,898; GS-05: \$31,751 to \$41,271

**Series & Grade:** GS-0404-04/05

**Promotion Potential:** 05

**Who May Be Considered:**

Applications will be accepted from United States citizens.

**Job Summary:**

Find Solutions to Agricultural Problems that Affect Americans Every Day, From Field to Table

The incumbent participates in research designed to screen and develop plant extracts and other ecologically safe chemicals for pathogen control.

Your U.S. citizenship must be verified prior to entrance on duty.

**Open Period:** Monday, August 04, 2008  
to Monday, August 25, 2008

**Position Information:** Full-Time Temporary position not to exceed 6 Months

**Duty Locations:** 1 vacancy - Washington, DC Metro Area

## Duties

**Major Duties:**

The incumbent assists in the screening of plant extracts in order to identify plant extracts that are effective against organisms causing diseases in ornamental plants, including a wide variety of soil-borne fungi. The incumbent provides assistance in several phases of the experimental process by performing a variety of technical duties in laboratory, field and greenhouse environments. These duties include:

- preparing media;
- inoculating cultures;
- measuring inhibitions;
- determining disease progression using standardized disease ratings; and
- analyzing data.

## Qualifications and Evaluation

**Qualifications:**

Your education and experience will be evaluated against all qualification requirements (basic and any additional requirements) listed below.

**Basic Requirements:**

**GS-4:** The applicant must possess **six (6) months of general experience** and **six (6) months of specialized experience**; **or**, successful completion of **two (2) years** of study that included at least 12 semester hours in any combination of courses such as horticulture, botany, biology, chemistry, statistics, entomology, animal husbandry, physics, agriculture or mathematics. At least 6 semester hours of courses must be directly related to this position.

**GS-05:** The applicant must possess **one year of specialized experience** equivalent to at least the GS-04 level in the Federal service; **or**, successful completion of a **full 4-year** course of study leading to a bachelor's degree with major study or at least 24 hours in any combination of courses such as horticulture, botany, biology, chemistry, statistics, entomology, animal husbandry, physics, agriculture or mathematics (with at least six semester hours directly related to this position); **or a combination of education and experience.**

**General Experience:** (1) Any type of work that demonstrates the applicant's ability to perform the work of the position, or (2) experience that provided a familiarity with the subject matter or processes of the broad subject area of the occupation.

**Specialized Experience is** experience which has equipped you with the following Knowledge, Skills and Abilities - 'KSAs' required to perform the duties of this position:

1. Knowledge of the basic principals of plant pathology, microbiology, or plant care and maintenance.
2. Ability to keep accurate records.
3. Skill in operating a personal computer and software for research related data collection, tabulation, summarization, and analysis.

**Education:**

If qualifying all or in part based on your education, you must submit a copy of your academic transcripts OR a list of college courses with credit hours, dates completed, and grade point average or class ranking to verify education when applying for this position. If this information is not provided, your education may not be appropriately evaluated and you may lose consideration for this position. If you are selected for this position, you will have to provide an official copy of your transcripts prior to entering on duty. Application materials will not be returned.

Education completed in foreign colleges or universities may be used to meet the above requirements if you can show that the foreign education is comparable to that received in an accredited educational institution in the United States. It is your responsibility to provide such evidence when applying. Please visit the Office of Personnel Management's website at <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-II/s2-e4.htm#e4a> for additional information on this topic.

**How You Will Be Evaluated:**

You will be evaluated to determine if you meet the basic and any additional requirements. The Agricultural Research Service uses a category rating process. Based on evaluation of all written materials submitted in application for the position, you will be determined to be Ineligible, if you do not meet eligibility and/or minimum qualifications criteria; Eligible, if you meet all eligibility and minimum qualifications criteria; OR Quality, if you meet quality criteria in addition to eligibility and minimum qualifications criteria. For

information about how to address KSAs, please visit our website at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers>, click on 'How to Apply,' then click on 'What are those KSAs anyway?' For more information about the evaluation process, please visit our website at: [www.ars.usda.gov/careers](http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers), click on 'How to Apply,' then click on the link to 'Qualifications and What They Mean.'

#### Benefits and Other Information

##### **Benefits:**

A Benefits Package is not authorized for this position. Additional information about Federal benefits can be obtained at [www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm).

##### **Other Information:**

##### **Veteran's Preference:**

For further details, call the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) at 703-724-1850 or TDD 978-461-8404. Select General Information on the Federal Employment Policies and Procedures, and then Veteran's Preference and Special Appointing Authorities for Veterans. Visit their VetGuide website at <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>.

**Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 (VEOA):** Qualified candidates eligible under the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA), a special hiring authority, will be considered. VEOA eligibles are preference eligibles or veterans who have been separated from the armed forces under honorable conditions after 3 years or more of active service. Veterans who are released under honorable conditions shortly before completing a 3-year tour are also eligible.

##### **Creditable Service:**

Service credit for annual leave accrual may be granted for directly related non-Federal work experience or uniformed service for newly appointed individuals, or those individuals reappointed after a break in service from civilian Federal employment of at least 90 calendar days. The amount of non-Federal service to be credited will be based on the amount of directly related and documented experience that the selectee possesses as documented by the employee and which is approved by agency management.

##### **USDA CTAP/ICTAP or Federal Displaced Employees:**

Applicants requesting consideration under the CTAP or ICTAP programs must submit documentary evidence of eligibility. Well qualified CTAP and ICTAP applicants within the local commuting area will receive selection priority as provided by OPM regulations. Well-qualified means the applicant meets the basic qualification and eligibility requirements and all selective factors; is rated above minimally qualified against the KSAs or quality criteria; and is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry. If you are requesting consideration as a CTAP or ICTAP applicant, you must submit the following:

- 1) A copy of your RIF Separation Notice or Certification of Expected Separation or other documentation indicating that you are a surplus employee;
- 2) Evidence of full performance level of current position;
- 3) A copy of your most recent performance appraisal; and
- 4) A copy of your most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action.

##### **Relocation Expenses:**

Payment of relocation expenses will be determined in accordance with P&P 412.5, Recruitment and Retention Incentives and Other Special Pay, Sections 6 and 7, as amended by Bulletins 03-402 and 05-412.5, which may be found at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/412-05.htm#H10>. See also [http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/staffing\\_recruit/reloweb.htm](http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/staffing_recruit/reloweb.htm).

##### **Financial Disclosure Requirement:**

Federal employees are subject to prohibitions against officially dealing with

outside organizations in which they have a financial interest. You may be required to submit a financial disclosure report if hired for this position.

**False statements:**

If you make a false statement in any part of your application, you may not be hired; may be fired after beginning work; or may be fined or jailed.

**Optional Form 306, (Declaration for Federal Employment):**

If you are selected for this position, you will be required to complete this form before an offer may be made.

**Selective Service System:**

Males over age 18 who were born after December 31, 1959, must have registered with the Selective Service System (or have an exemption) to be eligible for Federal employment.

**ARS Reasonable Accommodation Contact Information:**

If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, or have questions regarding reasonable accommodation and/or accessibility for any part of the application and hiring process, please contact the Disability Program Manager on 202-720-6161 or through the DC Relay Service on 202-855-1234 (TDD).

**How to Apply****How To Apply:**

Mail your applications so it will be postmarked by closing date. If hand delivered, be sure your application is received by closing date.

**If application packages do not contain all of the requested information, you may lose consideration for the job. To help you ensure your application fully outlines your qualifications and eligibility for this position, please submit the following documentation as appropriate. Some of the items listed may not apply to you. NOTE: Applications received in postage paid government envelopes will not be considered.**

**APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECKLIST**

\_\_\_ Optional Form 612 (Optional Application for Federal Employment), Resume, Curriculum Vitae, or other document outlining your qualifications (Go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to obtain the OF-612).

**The following information is required of all applicants:**

\_\_\_ Announcement number, title, and grade(s) of the position

\_\_\_ Full name, mailing address (including zip code) and day and evening phone numbers (with area code)

\_\_\_ Statement that you are a U.S. citizen (if not using the OF-612)

\_\_\_ Copy of DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) (only if claiming veteran's preference) (Visit the following web site for additional information:

<http://www.opm.gov/employ/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>

\_\_\_ SF-15 (Application for 10-point Veteran's Preference) plus the support documentation required by this form (if claiming 10-point veteran's preference) (Go to the web site at

<http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/sf.asp> to obtain form.)

\_\_\_ Paid and non-paid work experience related to the position. For each period of work experience include:

\_\_\_ Job title

\_\_\_ Series/grade (if Federal employment)

\_\_\_ Duties and accomplishments

\_\_\_ Employer's name and address

\_\_\_ Supervisor's name and contact information

\_\_\_ Starting and ending dates of employment (at least month/year)

\_\_\_ Number of hours worked per week

\_\_\_ Salary

\_\_\_ Indicate if we may contact current supervisor/employer

\_\_\_ Other job related information, such as training courses (title & year); skills (e.g., other languages, computer software/hardware, tools, etc.)

\_\_\_ Certificates/licenses (current)

\_\_\_ Honors, awards, and special accomplishments

\_\_\_ Supplemental questionnaire if applicable  
(usually for Federal Wage System positions - WG, WL, WS)

\_\_\_ Copy of college transcripts (if qualifying all or in part on the basis of education for this position) (If you have non-conventional education, e.g., foreign study, continuing education units, life experience, etc., go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-II/s2-e4.htm#e4a> and look under the heading "Other Education" for information governing acceptability of this type of education.)

\_\_\_ Copy of SF-50 (Notification of Personnel Action) to verify possession of competitive civil service status (if you are a current or previous federal employee)

\_\_\_ Copy of most recent performance appraisal (if you are a current federal employee)

\_\_\_ Support documentation for eligibility for special hiring authorities, such as disability, Peace Corps service, etc. (If you have questions about whether you are eligible for a particular hiring authority, please call the servicing HR specialist or visit the web site at [http://www.opm.gov/Strategic\\_Management\\_of\\_Human\\_Capital/fhfr/default.asp](http://www.opm.gov/Strategic_Management_of_Human_Capital/fhfr/default.asp)

\_\_\_ Support documentation if you are a USDA surplus or federal displaced employee (See pertinent section under "Other Important Information" below.

\_\_\_ Self-certification of typing speed (if required as a basic qualification for the position)

\_\_\_ While not required, a separate response to the required knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs listed under Specialized Experience) and Selective Placement Factor(s), if present, for this position may better highlight your specific qualifications for this position. (For an explanation of KSAs, go to the web site at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers/whatksa.html>).

If this is your first time applying for a federal job, or if you wish to view more detailed information about various aspects of applying for federal jobs, go to <http://www.usajobs.gov/infocenter/>.

Please indicate the lowest grade or salary you are willing to accept. If not indicated, we will only consider

you at the highest grade for which you qualify.

**Contact Information:**

Laverne Blackwell  
Phone: 301-504-1335  
Fax: 301-504-1535  
TDD: 202-855-1234  
Email: SCIRECRUIT@ARS.USDA.GOV

Or write:

Department Of Agriculture  
USDA-REE-ARS-HRD/Announcement #ARS-D8E-0209  
5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Stop #5104  
Beltsville, MD 20705-5104  
E-Mail: SCIRECRUIT@ARS.USDA.GOV  
Fax: 301-504-1535

**What To Expect Next:**

Applicants will receive written confirmation from this office when their application package is received.

After the application has been received, applicants will not be notified of the status of their paperwork until a final selection has been made.

**EEO Policy Statement**

The United States Government does not discriminate in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, membership in an employee organization, or other non-merit factor.

**Reasonable Accommodation Policy Statement**

Federal agencies must provide reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities where appropriate. Applicants requiring reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process should contact the hiring agency directly. Determinations on requests for reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis.

**Veterans Information**

Veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces and were separated under honorable conditions may be eligible for [veterans' preference](#). For service beginning after October 15, 1976, the veteran must have served the required length of time and have a Campaign Badge, Expeditionary Medal, a service-connected disability, or have served in the Gulf War between August 2, 1990, and January 2, 1992.

[The Veterans Employment Opportunity Act \(VEOA\)](#) gives veterans access to job vacancies that might otherwise be closed to them. The law allows eligible veterans to compete for vacancies advertised under agency's promotion procedures when the agency is seeking applications from outside of its own workforce.

To claim veterans' preference, veterans should be ready to provide a copy of their DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, or other proof. Veterans with service connected disability and others claiming 10 point preference will need to submit [Form SF-15, Application for 10-point Veterans' Preference](#).

For more specifics on all veterans employment issues such as Veterans preference or special appointing authorities see the [VetGuide](#).

**Legal and Regulatory Guidance**

**Social Security Number** - Your Social Security Number is requested under the authority of Executive Order 9397 to uniquely identify your records from those of other applicants who may have the same name. As allowed by law or Presidential directive, your Social Security Number is used to seek information about you from employers, schools, banks, and others who may know you. Failure to provide your Social Security Number on your application materials, will result in your application not being processed

**Privacy Act** - Privacy Act Notice (PL 93-579): The information requested here is used to determine qualifications for employment and is authorized under Title 5 U.S.C. 3302 and 3361.

**Signature** - Before you are hired, you will be required to sign and certify the accuracy of the information in your application.

**False Statements** - If you make a false statement in any part of your application, you may not be hired; you may be fired after you begin work; or you may be subject to fine, imprisonment, or other disciplinary action.

**Selective Service** - If you are a male applicant born after December 31, 1959, you must certify that you have registered with the Selective Service System, or are exempt from having to do so under the Selective Service Law.

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Department Of Agriculture  
USDA-REE-ARS-HRD/Announcement #ARS-D8E-0209  
5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Stop #5104  
Beltsville, MD 20705-5104  
E-Mail: SCIRECRUIT@ARS.USDA.GOV  
Fax: 301-504-1535

**Questions?****For questions about this job:**

Laverne Blackwell  
Phone: 301-504-1335  
Fax: 301-504-1535  
TDD: 202-855-1234  
Email: SCIRECRUIT@ARS.USDA.GOV

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